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The Relationship Between Parents' Perceptions of School Climate and their Inclination to Report a Bullying Incident to a School Administrator

Debra Strauss
debra.strauss@student.shu.edu

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The Relationship Between Parents' Perceptions of School Climate and Their
Inclination to Report a Bullying Incident to a School Administrator

By

Debra Strauss

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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K-12 School Administration
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APPROVAL FOR SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE

Debra Strauss, has successfully defended and made the required modifications to the text of the doctoral dissertation for the Ed.D. during this **Spring Semester 2018**.

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE
(please sign and date beside your name)

Mentor:

Dr. Joseph Stetar

3/3/18

Committee Member:

Dr. Michael Kuchar

2/26/18

Committee Member:

Dr. Lauren Schoen

2/2/18

Committee Member:

Dr. William Ronzitti

2-26-18

The mentor and any other committee members who wish to review revisions will sign and date this document only when revisions have been completed. Please return this form to the Office of Graduate Studies, where it will be placed in the candidate's file and submit a copy with your final dissertation to be bound as page number two.

The Relationship Between Parents' Perceptions of School Climate and Their Inclination to Report a Bullying Incident to a School Administrator

ABSTRACT

It is common for school administrators to be unaware of school bullying that has occurred because students typically conceal it. Yet recent legislation has made schools responsible for eliminating bullying. Research indicates that students who choose to reveal victimization are more likely to tell a trusted parent than school personnel. Consequently, the information gained through parental reporting is essential to the school's ability to help students and conduct interventions and prevention efforts in general. Examining the relationship between parental perceptions of the school climate and their inclination to report student victimization offers valuable information that can aide schools in combating bullying.

The current study was based on the following overriding research question: What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's climate and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator? The three underlying research questions were as follows: 1) What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which parents are incorporated into school life and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator? 2) What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's academic climate, including their satisfaction with the overall instructional quality, and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a

school administrator? 3) What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which the school's communications and administrative efforts are open, honest, sincere, and fair and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator? This quantitative study employed primary data consisting of New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey results and responses to four bullying questions and six demographic questions. The parents of students in kindergarten through fifth grade served as the participants. The results were statistically significant but moderately weak for the first research question and statistically significant but weak for the third.

Given the important goal of assisting victimized youth and ameliorating bullying, it is essential for even moderately weak and weak results to lead to action. Therefore, resources should be allocated toward improving school climate because of its link with increasing parental willingness to reveal their child's victimization. Through increased collaboration, parents and administrators can better understand victimization in their schools and be more capable of intervening effectively.

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my level of anxiety related to technology and allowed me to focus instead on the goals of my project.

I am grateful to the Saddle River School District Board of Education and Administrative Team for their willingness to allow me to conduct my research within their district. I hope that the results of this study assist them in their quest to end bullying in their district. I am thankful for the assistance I received from Franklin Lakes parents and from the Child Assault Prevention facilitators, without whom I could not have completed the reliability and validity studies for my Bullying Survey. I am extremely grateful to my Saddle River Special Education partner, Mrs. June Knopf, for her daily support with this study and with so much more. She is a true friend.

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seeing me accomplish this endeavor. Lastly, I am grateful to Toby, Winnie, and Sadie, my three Golden Doodles, for sitting with me (sometimes on me) while I read and typed. I know they would have preferred a walk outside.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to Dr. Daniel Olweus. It is because of his pioneering work that bullying has gained the attention and understanding required to eradicate this epidemic.

I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Michael Strauss

In memory of my father, Louis Soroken

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Public concern regarding the problem of bullying has increased to the extent that laws have been passed in all 50 states to protect children and adolescents from victimization (Maag & Katsiyannis, 2012). Although schools are now legally responsible for reporting bullying and intervening in bullying situations, school administrators and staff members may often be unaware that these incidents have occurred. Victimization is most often perpetrated in school areas where there is less adult supervision, such as hallways, bathrooms, playgrounds, or cafeterias (Tenenbaum, Varjas, Meyers, & Parris, 2011). Moreover, the victimized students tend to hide bullying from adults by not reporting it. However, research has indicated that students, especially girls and those students in lower grades, are more likely to tell a parent about their victimization than an adult at school (Holt, Kaufman, Kantor, & Finkelhor, 2009). Although parents are often advised to notify the school if their child has been bullied and then to work collaboratively with school personnel to resolve the situation, many decide to handle their child's victimization on their own. Instead of contacting the school, parents may choose to talk with their child, speak to the bully or the bully's parents, or just ignore the problem. Many parents do not know how to help their child, and consequently, they might make the situation worse (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Duong, 2011). The literature on parents' perceptions of the issue of bullying and the ways in which they respond to it is scant (Cooper & Nickerson, 2012). Research on the factors

associated with parents' responses to their child's victimization is also limited (Waasdorp et al., 2011). The current research on parents and bullying indicates that it is advantageous for parents to be included in school initiatives that combat bullying (Olweus & Limber, 2007). Additionally, recent research shows that parents' opinions of the school's climate may affect their decision to involve themselves in their child's victimization problem at school or to participate in school anti-bullying programs (Waasdorp et al., 2011). There have been numerous studies investigating the relationship between school climate and parent involvement with their child's school. The results of these studies show higher levels of parental involvement when the parents view the school climate as positive (Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Lavenda, 2011). Potentially related to this is a connection between school climate and parents' responses to their child's victimization, specifically whether a positive perception of the school's climate is related to increased parental involvement in the form of reporting a bullying incident to a school administrator (Waasdorp et al., 2011).

Purpose of the Study

Because bullying behavior is typically concealed from adults, it is common for school administrators to be unaware that it has occurred. Yet recent legislative acts have made schools throughout the United States responsible for eliminating bullying (Bellmore, 2016). Research indicates that although students tend to cover up their victimization, if they do tell an adult at all, it is more likely to be a parent than school personnel (Holt et al., 2009). Consequently, the information gained through parents' reporting of their child's victimization is essential to the school's

ability to help the child, as well as to conduct intervention and prevention efforts in general (Waasdorp et al., 2011). Examining the relationship between the school climate and parents' inclination to report their child's victimization to a school administrator, rather than responding to their child's situation through different means, offers valuable information that can aide schools in combating bullying.

Problem Statement

By law, school administrators in the United States are required to eradicate bullying, yet they are not typically informed when victimization occurs in their school (Nash, 2012). Without accurate information about the victimization experienced by their students, school administrators cannot respond effectively.

Underlying Research Question

What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's climate and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?

Research Questions

- 1) What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which parents are incorporated into school life and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?

- 2) What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's academic climate, including their satisfaction with the overall instructional quality, and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?

3) What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which the school's communications and administrative efforts are open, honest, sincere, and fair and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?

Hypotheses

H_0^1 : There is no statistically significant relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which they are incorporated into school life and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator.

H_0^2 : There is no statistically significant relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's academic climate, including their satisfaction with the overall instructional quality, and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator.

H_0^3 : There is no statistically significant relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which the school's communications and administrative efforts are open, honest, sincere, and fair and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator.

Significance of the Study

Throughout the world, bullying creates an unsafe learning environment for many students, and victimization at the hands of a bully has serious lifelong social, emotional, and academic consequences (Hampel, Manhal, & Hayer, 2009; Juvonen, Wang, & Espinoza, 2011; Otieno & Choongo, 2010; Nansel, Overpeck, & Pilla, 2007; Kim, Catalano, Haggerty, & Abbott, 2011; Olweus, 2011; Bonanno & Hymel, 2010; Heilbron & Prinstein, 2010). In fact, examples of student suicides that are tied to severe bullying have been publicized in the United States, as well as in other countries (Copeland, Wolke, Angold, & Costello, 2013; Farrington & Ttofi, 2011). Moreover, research on the backgrounds of 41 school shooters reveals that having been bullied is an experience these perpetrators tend to have in common (Vossekuil, Fein, Reddy, Borum, & Modzeleski, 2002).

It has been acknowledged that a comprehensive approach involving school personnel and families is required to effectively address school bullying (Rose, Nickerson, & Stormont, 2015). However, school administrators need to first be aware of bullying incidents in their school to assist victimized students and create and implement appropriate school-wide interventions and prevention programs. If we don't know what is going on, how can we react?

Research shows that the longer children are victimized, the harder it is for them to free themselves from bullies and the greater the chance that they will experience adverse effects (Oliver & Candappa, 2007). Although schools encourage students to tell someone about bullying, many students are reluctant to reveal their victimization, and younger children in particular are more likely to tell a parent than

a teacher (Holt et al., 2009). Parents require the skills and knowledge provided through school anti-bullying programs to help their children escape from victimization and cope with their experiences. Parents also need to develop confidence in their child's school administration and trust that the school will work with them to help their child. Therefore, gaining an understanding of factors such as school climate, which is potentially related to a parent's willingness to come forward and assist his or her child, is essential in efforts to ameliorate bullying.

Limitations of the Study

The following are the limitations of the study:

1. Participants include parents of kindergarten through fifth grade students in a single elementary school.
2. Participants were asked to self-report whether they would or would not report bullying to an administrator as opposed to what they did or did not do in a real-life situation.
3. This study was conducted in a small school district; therefore, the participants included all 107 parents or sets of parents of elementary school-age students. Although the sample size diminished because of a less-than 100% response rate, the researcher expected a large number of surveys to be returned (approximately 60%) based on the high response rate the district has experienced in the past 3 years for the New Jersey School Climate Survey.
4. The New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey is only one of many potential survey possibilities. The use of a different survey may have led to different results. This survey was chosen because a New Jersey School Climate Survey

is administered each year to every family in the district, regardless of its use in the current study. Added to the parent version of the survey for the present study are four bullying questions and six demographic questions.

5. The use of a convenience sample as opposed to use of random sampling may have impacted the ability to generalize the study.
6. Because of time constraints, the surveys were administered at a particular time of the year. Administering these at a different time may have impacted the results (i.e., the results could have been impacted by “senioritis” at the end of the school year).
7. Parents of New Jersey students are provided with information and training on the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights (Hu, 2011). This may have impacted the ability to generalize the results to parents in other states.
8. The researcher served as the supervisor of special services for the district in which the research was conducted. As one of four district administrators, the researcher is “a familiar face” to some parents. Knowledge that a district employee is conducting the study for her doctoral dissertation may have served as an inducement for parents to participate. However, it was not expected to bias participants’ responses or place pressure on them to partake in the current study.
9. The study instrument was designed so that participants’ anonymity would not be compromised. The instrument consists of the New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey, four questions concerning parents’ inclination to

report a bullying incident to an administrator, and six demographic questions.

Delimitations

Careful consideration of the following delimitations impacted the focus of the current study and its design:

1. Data were collected from parents of elementary school children only. Middle school and high school data were not examined in this study.
2. The researcher served as the district anti-bullying coordinator. Although experience in this role has inspired great interest in the study, the possibility of bias exists.
3. Parents' inclination to report a bullying incident to a teacher was not investigated in the present study.
4. Data were collected for parents of students in a small school environment. Large school data were not investigated.
5. Data were collected for parents of students in a suburban school environment. Rural and urban school data were not investigated.
6. Parent's inclination to report a bullying incident to an administrator was examined in the current study. Reports by students or school staff members were not examined.
7. Although research exists on parents' qualities and their relationship with bullying and victimization, this was not the focus of the present study.
8. Although similar, several definitions of bullying and school climate exist. The researcher has chosen to define bullying according to Dr. Olweus's (1993)

definition and to define school climate according to the National School Climate Council's definition (2016).

9. Only three out of six of the school climate domains included in the New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey—*teaching and learning, relationships, and parental support and engagement*—were examined in the current study. The domains of *physical environment, morale in the school community, and safety-emotional environment* were not examined.

Definition of Terms

All vocabulary used in the present study that may be have been used in a unique way are defined below:

Bullying – A form of aggressive behavior in school-age children and adolescents in which the bully intentionally inflicts harm, distress, or fear on his or her victim. These unwanted negative interactions happen repeatedly and involve a perceived or real imbalance of power or strength (Olweus, 1993).

Victimization – Receipt of aggressive acts.

School climate – “School climate refers to the quality and character of school life.

School climate is based on patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures” (National School Climate Center, 2016, p. 1).

Social-ecological theory – Originated as a means of conceptualizing the dynamic interrelationship among personal and environmental factors. Psychologist Kurt Lewin's “A Dynamic Theory of Personality: Selected Papers” (1935)

presents the relationship between people and their social environments as an equation that yields behavior.

Ecological systems theory – In the 1970s, developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner applied the social-ecological theory to human development. According to Bronfenbrenner's "Ecological Framework for Human Development," "The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded" (p. 21).

School administrator – A superintendent, principal, vice principal, assistant principal, director, or supervisor.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Recent legislation throughout the United States has made school districts more accountable for the prevalence rates and outcomes of bullying incidents (Maag & Katsiyannis, 2012). New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights, enacted in 2011, is one of the most comprehensive of these state laws (Nash, 2012). Although schools are responsible for resolving bullying situations, school administrators and staff are often unaware that these incidents have occurred because students typically conceal bullying and victimization from adults. Students who do choose to seek out help from an adult are more likely to reveal their victimization to a parent than to school administrators (Brown et al., 2013). Through school anti-bullying programs, parents are advised to notify the school if their child has been bullied and to work with school personnel to resolve the problem, but many parents decide to handle their child's victimization on their own. Sometimes, their unguided efforts make the situation worse (Sawyer, Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2011). Research shows that parents are more involved in their child's school when they perceive the school climate as being positive (Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Lavenda, 2011). It is possible that parents who perceive the school climate as being positive would also be more involved in the school regarding informing a school administrator about their child's victimization (Waasdorp et al., 2011). Information gained through parents' reporting of their child's victimization is essential to the school's ability to help the child, as well as for bullying prevention and intervention efforts in general. School

administrators need assistance from parents to gain a clearer understanding of the bullying that exists in their school (Waasdorp et al., 2011).

The purpose of the current study was to describe the relationship between parents' perceptions of the school's climate and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. Parents' perceptions of the school climate were measured through the use of the New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey, and the parents' inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator were measured through four survey questions presented to parents in the school climate survey.

The review of the literature is divided into the following four sections: (1) bullying; (2) help-seeking and parental support; (3) parental reporting behavior and school climate; and (4) theoretical framework. Section 1 defines bullying and discusses knowledge that has been gained about bullying since the pioneering work of Norwegian psychologist Daniel Olweus in 1973. Section 2 discusses the research findings on students' help-seeking behavior, in particular accessing help from parents. Section 3 discusses the research findings on the relationship between parent involvement in their child's school and the school climate and the research that links these two elements to bullying. Section 4 discusses the theoretical framework of the social-ecological theory and its connection to parent reporting and bullying in general.

Bullying

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior in school-age children and teens in which the bully intentionally inflicts harm, distress, or fear on his or her victim.

These unwanted negative interactions happen repeatedly and involve a perceived or real imbalance of power or strength. This conceptualization of bullying is derived from the work of Dr. Daniel Olweus (1993), the Norwegian research psychologist who is considered the father of bullying research. His earliest bullying study was published in Norway in 1973 and in the United States in 1978 in a book titled *Aggression in the Schools: Bullies and Whipping Boys*. Olweus (as cited in Nash, 2012) points out that there are many types of bullying, including physical, verbal, social exclusion or isolation, bullying through telling lies and rumors, bullying through taking or damaging a victim's possessions, and through threatening or forcing another student to do things he or she does not want to do. There is also racial, sexual, and cyber bullying (Olweus, 2012 as cited in Nash, 2012; Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012). A single student or group of students can commit bullying behavior against a single victim or group of victims (Davidson & Demaray, 2007). Although Olweus published his influential bullying study in 1973, it was not until 1982 that Norwegian school officials acted on the problem of school bullying. After three 14-year-old boys committed suicide as a result of being bullied relentlessly by peers, the Norwegian Ministry of Education launched a national campaign against bullying by instituting Olweus's prevention program in every primary and secondary school. After this, many other countries, including the United States, began to recognize that bullying is a serious matter requiring intervention (Olweus, 1993). In the United States, the White House (2011), the American Academy of Pediatrics (2009), and the American Psychological Association (2004) have

identified bullying as a serious national health issue affecting young Americans (Bellmore, 2016).

Research indicates that as many as 30% of North American students are bullied regularly, and of these, 8–10% are abused at school on a daily basis (Vaillancourt et al., 2010, as cited in Wang et al., 2014). Bullying is an insidious problem for students, one that crosses gender, age, race, socioeconomic status, and nationality (Nansel et al., 2007; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; Graham, 2006; Christie-Mizell, 2004, as cited in Cortes & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2014). Although boys and girls have been identified as the perpetrators and victims of both physical and relational bullying, research shows that boys are physically bullied more than girls. The findings are inconsistent regarding gender differences in relational bullying and victimization. Bullying occurs most frequently during the elementary and middle school years and diminishes significantly during high school (Olweus, 1994; von Marees & Petermann, 2010). Students generally experience victimization by bullies at or near their school in areas that are less supervised by adults, such as hallways, bathrooms, playgrounds, or cafeterias (Tenenbaum et al., 2011).

Several studies document the short- and long-term social, emotional, physical, behavioral, and academic consequences of bullying for both the victims and perpetrators. The victims have been found to experience increased adjustment problems, including symptoms of depression and anxiety, feelings of rejection, negative self-concept, withdrawal, loneliness, helplessness, and the belief that the bullying was deserved (Hampel et al., 2009). Victims of bullying tend to underperform academically, have a negative view of school, exhibit school-avoidant

behaviors such as truancy and frequent absenteeism, and drop out of school at a higher rate than their non-bullied peers (Juvonen et al., 2011; Otieno & Choongo, 2010; Nansel et al., 2007). Bullied students are at risk for suicidal ideation, non-suicidal self-injury, and suicide (Kim et al., 2011; Olweus, 2011; Bonanno & Hymel, 2010; Heilbron & Prinstein, 2010). The perpetrators of bullying tend to evidence externalizing problems, lack of confidence, ineffective coping skills, emotional regulation deficits, peer rejection, academic difficulties, and affiliation with anti-social peer groups (Kim et al., 2011; Olweus, 2011; Ferrás & Selman, 2014; Prinstein, Boergers, & Vernberg, 2001). The effects of bullying and victimization that begin in childhood may continue to impact a perpetrator or victim into adulthood (Copeland et al., 2013; Farrington & Ttofi, 2011).

Because of public awareness of the prevalence rates and consequences of bullying, state legislatures have passed laws requiring schools to adopt anti-bullying policies and institute reporting procedures, prevention plans, and intervention strategies to address this problem. As of 2015, laws in all 50 states specify a student's right to a safe school environment and the school's responsibility to protect children and teens from bullying (Bellmore, 2016). Although every state law requires schools to develop policies to address bullying, some include additional components that identify prohibited behaviors, underscoring the importance of familiarizing the entire school community with the policy and supporting prevention and intervention training (Hatzenbuehler, Schwab-Reese, Ranapurwala, Hertz, & Ramirez, 2015; Lovegrove, Bellmore, Green, Jens, & Ostrov, 2013). The

swift actions states have taken, often in response to widely publicized bullying incidents, seem to reflect a society-wide concern about bullying (Bellmore, 2016).

In 2011, responding to the suicide of a bullied Rutgers University student, New Jersey passed what has been called, “the toughest legislation against bullying in the nation” (Hu, 2011, p. 1). This law, titled “the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights,” requires school districts to adopt detailed anti-bullying policies that include staff training on bullying and suicide prevention and intervention; the appointment of a school specialist and district coordinator and the assignment of specific responsibilities to them; exact directives and deadlines for how, to whom, and when to report bullying incidents; and the mandatory posting of a grade on every district and school website, reflecting their efforts to combat bullying (Nash, 2012).

To understand the bullying problem, develop applicable anti-bullying prevention and intervention programs, and evaluate these programs for their effectiveness, school districts have acquired measurement approaches to gauge the amount and type of bullying occurring in the district (Casper, Meter, & Card, 2015). However, evidence from numerous studies has led to a change in how bullying is conceptualized, from what was at first considered a simple relationship between a bully and victim to a more fluid and changeable relationship between people and systems. The current viewpoint that considers bullying and victimization to be a whole-school problem, one impacted by individual, peer, family, school, and societal influences, requires schools to collect data from a variety of perspectives (Casper et al., 2015).

One of the most common bullying measures entails the use of student self-reports. Because self-reports are anonymous, they tend to produce higher levels of victimization than reports by other informants. Students may be willing to disclose bullying or victimization to a researcher but not to others, such as peers, teachers, or parents, which explains why these other informants tend to underestimate the prevalence of bullying compared with the students themselves (Casper et al., 2015). Peer reports are a second common source of data on bullying and victimization. Because bullying tends to be witnessed by other students and because peers are often present in situations where adults are not, peers tend to be well informed about the bullying incidents that occur in their school (Craig, Pepler, & Atlas, 2000). Teacher reports are a third source of data on bullying prevalence. However, whereas teachers are capable reporters of student behavior that takes place in their presence, they may not be aware of acts that are purposely committed when they cannot witness them. Moreover, their reports may be biased because of an inclination to want to portray their school or class as having a low level of bullying (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007; Casper et al., 2015). Although their input is not requested as often as that of students and teachers, parents are a fourth source of bullying and victimization data for schools. Even though parents are generally not present when bullying occurs at school, they are able to report incidents that are brought to their attention. However, as children, especially boys, mature, they become less willing to tell their parents about bullying (Hunter & Boyle, 2004). Still, the parents of young children tend to be more aware of their child's victimization than any other individual besides the victimized child. Research shows medium-

range correlations between parent and child reports of bullying victimization (Casper et al., 2015).

Dyadic reporting, for which students are required to identify specific others in the peer group who perform or receive bullying behavior, is a fifth source of bullying and victimization data for schools. Dyadic reports produce information on the specific relationships within a network of students (Casper et al., 2015).

Observation, a sixth source of data, is especially useful because it provides information about frequency, antecedents, consequences, and bystander behavior (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001, as cited in Casper et al., 2015). However, the observation of bullying can be problematic because it tends to be time-consuming and expensive; because students may act differently when they know they are being observed; and because there is an ethical concern regarding the need to intervene when witnessing bullying behavior (Felix, Sharkey, Green, Furlong, & Tanigawa, 2011).

Help-Seeking and Parental Support

Although bullying impacts millions of children throughout the world, adults are often unaware of the problem. Children tend not to disclose victimization for a variety of reasons; therefore, these children do not receive the help they need. They may be embarrassed; may believe that nothing will be done to help them; or may fear that telling someone will have negative consequences in terms of social rejection or retaliation from the bully (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Smith & Sharp, 1994; Mcleod & Morris, 1996, Oliver & Candappa, 2007). Yet telling someone about their victimization is one of the strategies available to students to help them manage

their problem and reduce their stress. Research shows that seeking social support as a problem-focused (dealing with the problem) and emotion-focused (dealing with negative emotions) approach is viewed by the victims as one of the more successful strategies for coping with victimization. Victims reveal that accessing social support and advice helped them learn various methods to contend with bullying, providing them with positive feedback and support from the people they trust (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002). Although students most often choose to hide their victimization, research finds that when they do disclose their victimization, they are more likely to tell a compassionate parent than a teacher (Holt et al., 2009, as cited in Brown et al., 2013). Therefore, parents appear to be an important source of bullying information for schools.

In a qualitative study, Brown et al. (2013) find that parents went through three stages—discovering, reporting, and living with the aftermath—when reporting their child’s victimization to the school. In the discovery stage, parents reported employing advice-giving to help their child. But as they became aware of their child’s escalating distress, they shifted their approach to notifying the school. All but one of the 11 parents in the study experienced resistance from school officials when it came to fully confronting the problem. However, one parent reported a positive and effective experience resulting from working with the school. Brown et al.’s (2013) study illustrates parents’ lack of knowledge about the roles and responsibilities of various school officials and their ambivalent feelings about notifying the school; it highlights an effective school protocol in dealing with bullying.

Research findings support the recommendation that parents report bullying to the school and work with school personnel to resolve bullying situations (Leff, 2007, as cited in Brown et al., 2013). Research also indicates that schools and families should work together on bullying-prevention efforts (Waasdorp et al., 2011). A meta-analysis of school anti-bullying programs finds parent training and parent meetings to be two of the most important components of a program (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). This study also finds an association between parent-directed program components and decreased school bullying incidents (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). Consequently, it is important for school leaders to understand what parents know and believe about the issue of bullying, what factors influence their decision to be involved in school anti-bullying programs, and what impacts the way they choose to respond to their child's victimization (Waasdorp et al., 2011).

Parental Reporting Behavior and School Climate

Most studies examining the relationship between school environmental factors and bullying have concentrated on students' and teachers' perceptions of the school environment. One component of the school environment—school climate—has become an important area of focus among researchers and school administrators because it has been linked to students' social and emotional wellbeing and academic achievement (LaSalle, Zabek, & Meyers, 2016). The National School Climate Council's definition of school climate states, "School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of students', parents' and school personnel's experience of school life and reflects norms, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and

organizational structures” (National School Climate Center, 2016, p. 1). Research shows that students’ perceptions of their school’s climate impact their behavior (Chaux, 2012, as cited in Ferrans & Selman, 2014). There is evidence that students who perceive their school climate as positive are less likely to exhibit risky behavior (Klein, Cornell, & Konold, 2012). There is also evidence that schools in which students perceive there is a negative climate have increased frequency of bullying, aggression, and victimization and a reduced sense of safety among the students (Goldweber, Waasdorp, & Bradshaw, 2013). Studies also show that students’ feelings about bullying and their involvement in it are impacted by the school climate (Bradshaw & Waasdorp, 2009; Espelage & Swearer, 2009). Consequently, researchers and educators recognize the need to concentrate on school climate as part of school-wide anti-bullying efforts (Cohen, Pickeral, & McCloskey, 2009).

Research also shows a relationship between parents’ perceptions of school climate and their actions. Parents who view the school’s climate as positive and supportive of their participation are more inclined to be involved in the school (Deplanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane, 2007, as cited in Waasdorp et al., 2011; Lavenda, 2011; Goldkind & Farmer, 2013). Similarly, Olweus’s (1993) findings indicate that parents’ perceptions of the school’s anti-bullying efforts are likely to affect the way they handle their child’s victimization. If the parents are dissatisfied with the school’s overall efforts, they are less likely to work collaboratively with the school to solve their child’s bullying problem. Building on this body of research, Waasdorp et al. (2011) examined the relationship between parents’ perceptions of school climate and how they respond to their child’s victimization; the researchers

found that parents' perceptions of the school climate and their choice of response to their child's victimization differed in relation to their child's age. Parents of elementary school-aged children were more inclined to view the school climate as positive and more likely to report bullying to the school than parents of middle or high school students.

Theoretical Framework

The relationship between parents' perceptions of the school climate and their inclination to report a bullying incident to an administrator can be understood according to the social-ecological theory (Rose et al., 2015). Bullying and victimization in general are now most often conceptualized through the lens of this theory as well (Hong & Espelage, 2012; Rose, Simpson, & Moss, 2015). The social-ecological theory originated as a means of conceptualizing the dynamic interrelationship among personal and environmental factors. Psychologist Kurt Lewin's "A Dynamic Theory of Personality: Selected Papers" (1935) presents the relationship between people and their social environments as an equation that yields behavior. In the 1970s, developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner applied the social-ecological theory to human development. According to Bronfenbrenner's "Ecological Framework for Human Development":

The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between

these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded.
(1979, p. 21)

According to the social-ecological theory, bullying and victimization can be understood as ecological phenomena that originate and are maintained through the complex interactions between an individual and the systems surrounding that individual, including the family, school, classroom, peer group, and larger community (Hong & Espelage, 2012). Parental behaviors and the school climate are among the factors that have been shown to impact bullying and victimization (Sawyer et al., 2011; Davidson & Demaray, 2007; Nickerson, Singleton, Schnurr, & Collen, 2014). In like manner, the parents' response to their child's victimization can be understood in terms of the interactions between intra- and inter-personal factors. Among the interpersonal factors that may be related to parents' inclinations to report a bullying incident to a school administrator are their perceptions of the school's climate.

Summary

The literature review in Chapter II provided an overview of the historical and current research on bullying and victimization, starting with Norwegian psychologist Daniel Olweus's pioneering study in the 1970s. The prevalence rates of bullying in the United States and research findings on the long- and short-term effects of bullying for perpetrators and victims were described. The emergence of anti-bullying laws throughout the United States was discussed, with a particular focus on the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights in New Jersey. The literature review described the approaches used to measure bullying, specifically the ones that reflect

the current conceptualization of bullying as a whole-school problem. Although their participation is integral to whole-school decision making, administrators' input is rarely included when bullying in their school is measured (Mishna, 2004). Research focusing on help seeking as a coping strategy was presented, including the findings that students who do reveal their victimization are more likely to tell a parent than a teacher. Evidence of a relationship between the school climate and bullying was discussed. A relationship between the school's climate and parents' involvement in their child's school has been supported by research. Possibly associated with this are the findings that the parents' choice of response to their child's victimization may be related to their perceptions of the school's climate. The present study attempted to add to the extensive body of research on bullying by examining the relationship between parents' perceptions of the school's climate and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This was a quantitative study in which numerical data were used to analyze results and hence address the research questions. This design was appropriate because the research questions required the analysis of numerical data to test for correlations between variables.

Description of the Design

A non-experimental, correlational, cross-sectional, and descriptive design with quantitative methods was used in the present study. This study employed primary data consisting of New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey results (three of the six domains) and responses to four questions relating to bullying (New Jersey Department of Education, 2014). The parents who were surveyed are the parents of students in kindergarten through fifth grade in a small suburban public school district in Northern New Jersey.

Participants

The participants for the current study were chosen through convenience sampling. Out of the 107 surveys mailed, 67 parents or sets of parents responded. Participants consisted of 67 parents or sets of parents of children in kindergarten through fifth grade in a pre-k-through-grade-five public elementary school. The participants' children range in age from 5–11 years old. One or both parents responded to the survey questions. In the case of a single-parent family, that parent, whether the father or mother, responded to the survey questions. There are

currently no cases of guardianship in this school district. To establish consistency, because participants ranged from having one to four children of elementary school age, and because the responses may be different for each child within a family, the participants were instructed to respond to the survey questions with their oldest enrolled elementary school child in mind.

The researcher anticipated at least a 60% response rate (approximately 64 surveys returned). There are several opinions regarding the minimum number of participants necessary for a correlational research study. One general rule of thumb for sample size is that a sample consisting of no fewer than 50 participants should be used for a correlation or regression, with the number of participants increasing with an increase in the number of independent variables (Wilson, Van Voorhis, & Morgan, 2007). Green (1991) suggests $N > 50 + 8m$ (where m represents the number of independent variables) for testing multiple correlations. He suggests that $N > 104 + m$ should be used when testing individual predictors. Harris (1985, as cited in Wilson et al., 2007) proposes another rule of thumb for the absolute minimum number of participants for a study with five or fewer predictors. According to Harris, the number of participants should be at least equal to the number of predictor variables plus 50. Ye, Gay, Mills, and Airasian (2012, p. 204) state that for a correlational study, "a minimally acceptable sample size is generally 30 participants." The present study has three independent variables. Although there are different viewpoints regarding the minimum number of participants necessary, based on the literature overall, a sample size of 107 with a prediction of a 60% return rate (64 responses) should be sufficient.

Measures

The survey instrument used in the current study was a compilation of three separate measures. Part I of the instrument, three of the six domains of the New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey, assesses parents' perceptions of school climate. The three specific domains measure *teaching and learning*, *relationships*, and *parental support and engagement* and were chosen because they are the most pertinent to a small, suburban elementary school environment. Part II of the instrument assesses parents' inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator, here through the use of four survey questions that cover four disparate types of bullying: physical bullying, verbal bullying, relational bullying, and cyber-bullying. Part III assesses demographic data, also through the survey questions.

Part I of the instrument, the New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey, is a paper and pencil survey covering the following six domains: *physical environment*; *teaching and learning*; *morale in the school community*; *relationships*; *parental support and engagement*; and *safety-emotional environment*. This parent-directed survey is part of a set of related school climate surveys, each one directed toward a different population of respondents (elementary school students and staff, middle school students and staff, high school students and staff, and the parents of students at all educational levels). The parent-directed survey consists of 45 Likert-style questions, each consisting of the following response choices: *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *neutral*, *agree*, and *strongly agree*.

According to the New Jersey Department of Education's (NJDOE) website (http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/NJSCS/12/NJSCS_Guide.pdf), the parent-directed school climate survey is based on six school climate domains identified from the literature. These six domains, as delineated above, are as follows: *physical environment; teaching and learning; morale in the school community; relationships; parental support and engagement; and safety-emotional environment*. The questions within these domains are derived from field-tested survey instruments that appeared on the United States Department of Education's Safe and Supportive Schools Technical Assistance Center website.

Reliability and Validity of the New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the Bloustein Center for Survey Research (BCSR) at Rutgers University conducted a reliability and validity study for the full set of New Jersey School Climate Surveys. The study focused on the surveys' item structures and assessed whether the items should be retained in their originally assigned domain, moved to a different domain, or eliminated entirely. The NJDOE and BCSR's findings led to a revision of the survey instruments, and the improved surveys have been available for school districts to use since the 2014–2015 school year.

The Bloustein Center performed factor analyses of each of the six domains on each population for which the survey was designed (elementary school students and staff, middle school students and staff, high school students and staff, and the parents of students at all educational levels). In total, 51,853 sets of survey responses were factor analyzed. The assessment of performance on each domain

scale was based on three goodness-of-fit measures: explanatory validity, predictive validity, and comparative model fit. Because of the analyses, changes were made to the distribution of questions over the domains. Although the analysis does not focus on Cronbach's alpha, the alpha values for the revised domains were reported, and the results strongly support the revisions made to the surveys. In addition to the reassignment of questions to the domains, redundant questions were eliminated, making the survey shorter. A summary of the reliability and validity study for the entire set of New Jersey School Climate Surveys can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/NJscs/NJSCSFactSheet.pdf>. In addition to conducting the Bloustein Center reliability and validity study, the New Jersey Department of Education piloted the complete set of climate surveys in several districts before releasing it for use.

Part II of the instrument for the current study is a four-question bullying scale. This part of the instrument begins with a statement defining the concept of bullying according to Dr. Daniel Olweus, the Norwegian research psychologist who is considered the father of bullying research (Nash, 2012). Dr. Olweus defines bullying as a form of aggressive behavior in school-age children and adolescents in which the bully intentionally inflicts harm, distress, or fear on his or her victim. These unwanted negative interactions happen repeatedly and involve a perceived or real imbalance of power or strength. Bullying can be perpetrated physically, verbally, relationally, or through electronic methods (Olweus, 1993).

The bullying survey further defines bullying by classifying the actions as physical bullying, verbal bullying, social (relational) bullying, or cyber-bullying,

according to the descriptions provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services' anti-bullying website "Stopbullying.gov." These classifications and their descriptions are the following:

“Physical bullying involves hurting a person’s body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:

- Hitting/kicking/punching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone’s things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures

Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

Social Bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone’s reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public” (What is Bullying, 2016, p. 1)

The following definition is given of cyber-bullying:

Cyber-bullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology.

Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text-messages, chat, and websites (What is Cyber-bullying, 2016, p. 1).

The instructions for Part II of the instrument direct parents to respond to four questions by placing a checkmark next to the answer that applies to them.

The bullying scale asks the following “would/would NOT” questions:

If my child were to be physically bullied at school or at a school-sponsored activity,

_____ I would inform a school administrator

_____ I would NOT inform a school administrator

If my child were to be verbally bullied at school or at a school-sponsored activity,

_____ I would inform a school administrator

_____ I would NOT inform a school administrator

If my child were to be relationally bullied at school or at a school-sponsored activity,

_____ I would inform a school administrator

_____ I would NOT inform a school administrator

If my child were to be bullied through electronic means such as a computer or cellular phone (cyber-bullied),

_____ I would inform a school administrator

_____ I would NOT inform a school administrator

The reliability of Part II of the instrument—the bullying survey—was assessed through the test–retest method. This method requires that the same survey be given to the same group of participants after a certain period of time. The reliability of the survey instrument is estimated by comparing the responses of the first and second survey administrations and assessing the level of consistency between them. If the exact results occur, then the correlation coefficient will be 1.00. However, most of the time, the correlation between the two administrations will be less than perfect because of the various experiences encountered by the subjects between the two administrations of the survey (Gay et al., 2012).

To assess test–retest reliability, the researcher administered the survey to a group of 21 parents of students attending a school in a neighboring district and then re-administered the survey to the same parents 3 days later, then went on to conduct a correlational analysis using the Pearson product-moment correlation method.

The validity of the bullying survey was ensured through the measurement of the content validity. Content validity is the degree to which the test items represent the domain of the property being measured (Gay et al., 2012). Both item validity (whether the items are appropriate for the measurement of the content area) and sampling validity (how well the survey covers the entire content area being

examined) make up the content validity and were examined (Gay et al., 2012). Content validity is ascertained through the judgment of experts (Gay et al., 2012). Therefore, the bullying survey was evaluated by three members of the Child Assault Prevention (CAP) team of facilitators who are experts in the area of bullying.

Part III of the instrument, the demographic survey, measures parent and student demographic information. The purpose of the demographic portion of the instrument was to determine if there is a link between particular demographic information and the parents' willingness to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. The demographic survey requested the following information: parents' age (age ranges are used), parents' highest level of education, and the grade and gender of the child for which the survey was completed.

Data Collection

The researcher mailed a survey packet to each potential participant's home address. Included in the packet were a stamped self-addressed envelope and a letter of solicitation that contained instructions to mail the completed survey to a designated secretary in the envelope provided. All participants were assigned a participant number, which replaced all potentially identifying information. No identifying information appeared on any of the surveys returned to the researcher. Participants were instructed not to put their names or any other identifying information on any of the survey pages. Internal review board (IRB) approval was sought and obtained prior to starting the study. After IRB approval, informed consent was obtained from each participant through his or her participation.

Data Analysis

Because this was a non-experimental study, no variables were manipulated. However, the non-manipulated independent variables are the three domain scores on the New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey that correspond to the three research questions. As mentioned above, there are three domain scores that correspond to three research questions.

The dependent variable is the score on the bullying survey. Scores can range from 0–4. A score of 0 means that there are no “I would inform a school administrator” responses, and a score of 4 means that there are four “I would inform a school administrator” responses. The researcher sought to describe the correlation, if any, that exists between parents’ perceptions of the school’s climate, as measured by their responses on the New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey, and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator, as measured by the four-question bullying survey. The statistical analyses were completed using the Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 23. The analysis addressed the research questions by showing the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables. The Pearson’s product-moment correlation method was used to analyze the data.

The relationships analyzed are as follows:

- 1) The relationship between parents’ perceptions of the degree parents are incorporated into school life and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator

2) The relationship between parents' perceptions of the school's academic climate, including their satisfaction with the overall instructional quality, and their inclination to report a bullying incident to an administrator

3) The relationship between parents' perceptions of the degree to which the school's communication and administrative efforts are open, honest, sincere, and fair and their inclination to report a bullying incident to an administration.

The overall question is as follows: What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's climate and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?

Table 1: Research Questions and Methodology

<i>Research Questions</i>	<i>Participants</i>	<i>Measures</i>	<i>Data Analysis</i>
What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree parents are incorporated into school life and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?	67 individual or sets of parents	New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey Parental Support and Engagement Domain New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey Full Survey Bullying Survey	Pearson product-moment correlation
What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's academic climate, including their satisfaction with the overall instructional quality, and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?	67 individual or sets of parents	New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey Teaching and Learning Domain New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey Full Survey Bullying Survey	Pearson product-moment correlation
What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which the school's communication and administrative efforts are open, honest, sincere, and fair and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a schools administrator?	67 individual or sets of parents	New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey Relationship Domain New Jersey School Climate Survey Full Survey Bullying Survey	Pearson product-moment correlation

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the analysis of the data collected for the current research study. The study was designed to examine the relationship between parents' perceptions of the school climate and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. Data were obtained using a three-part survey. The first part consists of three of the six domains that comprise the New Jersey School Climate Parents Survey. The second part consists of four bullying questions, and the third part includes parent and student demographic questions.

First, the results of the reliability and validity studies conducted for Part II of the survey, the researcher-designed Bullying Survey, are reported and analyzed. Next, the results of the research study are reported and analyzed through descriptive statistics and analyses using the Pearson product-moment correlation method. Subsequently, the three research questions are answered, the hypotheses are addressed, and finally, the impact of the demographic data on the results is reported and analyzed.

Bullying Survey: Reliability and Validity

The reliability of Part II of the instrument, the Bullying Survey, was assessed through the test-retest method. This method requires that the same survey be given to the same group of participants after a certain period of time. The reliability of the survey instrument is estimated by comparing the responses of the first and second survey administrations and assessing the level of consistency between them. If the

same results occur, then the correlation coefficient will be 1.00. However, most of the time, the correlation between the two administrations will be less than perfect because of the various experiences encountered by the subjects between the two administrations of the survey (Gay et al., 2012).

To assess test–retest reliability, the researcher administered the survey to a group of 21 parents of students attending elementary school in Franklin Lakes, a nearby district similar to the one in which the current study was being conducted. Then, the researcher re-administered the survey to the same parents 3 days later and conducted a correlational analysis using the Pearson product-moment correlation method. The Pearson correlation coefficient, the Pearson r , is .979, which is positive and very strong (it is close to 1). As scores on the first administration of the Bullying Survey increase, scores on the second administration increase as well. The correlation is significant ($p = .000$).

The validity of the Bullying Survey was ensured by measuring the content validity. Content validity is the degree to which test items represent the domain of the property being measured (Gay et al., 2012). Both item validity (whether the items are appropriate for the measurement of the content area) and sampling validity (how well the survey covers the entire content area being examined) make up the content validity and were examined in the current validity study (Gay et al., 2012). Content validity is ascertained by the judgment of experts (Gay et al., 2012). Therefore, the Bullying Survey was evaluated by three members of the Child Assault Prevention (CAP) team of facilitators who are experts in the area of bullying.

The results of the validity study are as follows: All three of the experts found each of the four items that comprise the Bullying Survey to be appropriate for the measurement of parents' willingness to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. Additionally, all three experts found that as a whole, the survey items cover all of the main bullying categories defined by scholars. Based on these results, it is believed that the Bullying Survey has content validity.

Results of the Study: Descriptive Statistics

Of the 107 surveys mailed to the parents, 67 were returned. Thus, the rate of return was 62.6%. Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for Part I of the survey.

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Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Part I of the Survey

<i>Domain</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Skewness</i>
Parental Support and Engagement	67	37.51	37.00	38	4.391	-.778
Teaching and Learning	67	44.12	40.00	38	13.585	4.440
Relationships	67	46.27	47.00	43	5.395	-.336

The mean score for the parental support and engagement domain was 37.51, the median was 37.00, the mode was 38, and the standard deviation was 4.391. Skewness was -.778. The mean score for the teaching and learning domain was 44.12, the median was 40.00, the mode was 38, and the standard deviation was 13.585. Skewness was 4.440. The mean score for the relationships domain was

46.27, the median was 47.00, the mode was 43, and the standard deviation was 5.395. Skewness was -.336.

Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for Part II of the survey, which consists of the four bullying questions.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Part II of the Survey

<i>Question</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Skewness</i>
Q 1. If my child were to be physically bullied at school or at a school sponsored activity, I would ...	67	.99	1.00	1	.122	-8.185
Q 2. If my child were to be verbally bullied at school or at a school sponsored activity, I would ...	67	.84	1.00	1	.373	-1.855
Q. 3 If my child were to be relationally bullied at school or at a school sponsored activity, I would ...	67	.82	1.00	1	.386	-1.712
Q 4. If my child were to be bullied through electronic means such as a computer or cellular phone (cyber-bullied), I would ...	67	.97	1.00	1	.171	-5.653
Total	67	3.61	4.00	4	.778	-2.379

For the total bullying score, one participant scored 0, six scored 2, ten scored 3, and fifty scored 4. The mean total score for the Bullying Survey was 3.61, the median was 4.00, the mode was 4, the standard deviation was .778, and the skewness was -2.379. For Question 1, "If my child were to be physically bullied at school or at a school sponsored activity, I would ..." 66 participants responded that they would inform a school administrator, and one responded that he or she would not inform a school administrator. The mean was .99, the median was 1.00, the mode was 1, the standard deviation was .122, and the skewness was -8.185. For Question 2, "If my child were to be verbally bullied at school or at a school sponsored activity, I would ..." 11 participants responded that they would not inform a school administrator, whereas 56 responded that they would inform a school administrator. The mean was .84, the median was 1.00, the mode was 1, the standard deviation was .373, and the skewness was -1.855. For Question 3, "If my child were to be relationally bullied at school or at a school sponsored activity, I would ..." 12 participants responded that they would not inform a school administrator, and 55 responded that they would inform a school administrator. The mean was .82, the median was 1.00, the mode was 1, the standard deviation was .386, and the skewness was -1.712. For Question 4, "If my child were to be bullied through electronic means such as a computer or cellular phone (cyber-bullied), I would ..." two participants responded that they would not inform a school administrator, and 65 responded that they would inform a school administrator. The mean was .97, the median was 1.00, the mode was 1, the standard deviation was .171, and the skewness was -5.653.

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for Part III of the survey, the demographic survey, which consists of six questions measuring parent and student demographic information.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Part III of the Survey

<i>Question</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Skewness</i>
Father's current age	66	2.91	3.00	3	.290	-2.913
Mother's current age	66	2.82	3.00	3	.389	-1.689
Father's highest degree attained	66	2.85	3.00	2	.996	-.168
Mother's highest degree attained	66	2.67	2.00	2	.934	.372
Grade of child	66	2.76	3.00	5	1.954	-.057
Gender of child	66	.42	.00	0	.498	.314

For Question 1, father's current age, category one was 20–29 years of age, category two was 30–39 years of age, and category three was age 40 or above. Sixty-six of the 67 participants responded to this question. Six of the fathers were in category two, and 60 were in category three. None were in category one. The mean score was 2.91, the median score was 3.00, and the mode was 3. The standard deviation was .290. Skewness was -2.913. For Question 2, mother's current age, category one was 20–29 years of age, category two was 30–39 years of age, and category three was age 40 or above. Sixty-six of the 67 participants responded to this question. Twelve of the mothers were in category two, and 54 were in category three. The mean score was 2.82, the median score was 3.00, the mode was 3.0, and the standard deviation was .389. Skewness was -1.689.

For Question 3, father's highest degree attained, category one was high school diploma, category two was bachelors, category three was masters, and category four was doctorate or professional. Sixty-six of the 67 participants responded to this question. Five of the fathers were in category one, 23 were in category two, 15 were in category three, and 23 were in category four. The mean score was 2.85, the median was 3.00, the mode was 2, and the standard deviation was .996. Skewness was -.168. For Question 4, mother's highest degree attained, category one was high school diploma, category two was bachelors, category three was masters, and category four was doctorate or professional. Sixty-six of the 67 participants responded to this question. Three of the mothers were in category one, 34 were in category two, 11 were in category three, and 18 were in category four. The mean score was 2.67, the median score was 2.00, the mode was 2, and the standard deviation was .934. Skewness was .372.

For Question 5, grade of child for whom the survey is being completed, category zero was kindergarten, category one was first grade, category two was second grade, category three was third grade, category four was fourth grade, and category five was fifth grade. Sixty-six of the 67 participants responded to this question. Ten of the children were in kindergarten, 15 were in first grade, six were in second grade, eight were in third grade, four were in fourth grade, and 23 were in fifth grade. The mean score was 2.76, the median score was 3.00, the mode was 5, and the standard deviation was 1.954. Skewness was -.057. For Question 6, gender of child for whom the survey is being completed, category zero was male and category one was female. Sixty-six of the 67 participants responded to this question.

Thirty-eight of the children were male, and 28 were female. The mean score was .42, the mode was 0, and the standard deviation was .498. Skewness was .314.

Results of the Study: Inferential Statistics

Table 5 shows the correlation between each of the three domains of the New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey and the total score of the Bullying Survey.

Table 5: Correlation Between Each of the Three Domains of the New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey and the Total Bullying Score

<i>Domain</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Pearson r</i>	<i>R²</i>	<i>Sig (2-tailed)</i>
Parental Support and Engagement	67	.320	.10	.008
Teaching and Learning	67	.207	.04	.093
Relationships	67	.242	.06	.049

The correlation between the parent support and engagement domain and the total bullying score was .320 ($r = .320$, $N = 67$, $p = .008$). This correlation was moderately weak and positive and was statistically significant at the .05 level of significance. The coefficient of determination (r^2) was .10, which means that 10% of the total bullying score can be explained by the parent support and engagement domain score. The correlation between the teaching and learning domain and the total bullying score was .207 ($r = .207$, $N = 67$, $p = .093$). This correlation was not statistically significant at the .05 level of significance. The coefficient of determination (r^2) was .04, which means that 4% of the total bullying score can be explained by the teaching and learning domain score. The correlation between the

relationships domain and the total bullying score was .242 ($r = .242$, $N = 67$, $p = .049$). This correlation was weak and positive and statistically significant at the .05 level of significance. The coefficient of determination (r^2) was .06, which means that 6% of the total bullying score can be explained by the relationships domain score.

Table 6 shows the correlation between the responses to each of the demographic questions and the total bullying score.

Table 6: Correlation between Responses to Demographic Questions
and Total Bullying Score

<i>Question</i>	<i>Pearson r</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Sig (2-tailed)</i>
Father's current age	.066	67	.594
Mother's current age	.064	67	.607
Father's highest degree attained	.060	67	.629
Mother's highest degree attained	.075	67	.485
Grade of child	.087	67	.485
Gender of child	.055	67	.656

The correlation between father's current age and the total bullying score was .066 ($r = .066$, $N = 67$, $p = .594$) and was not statistically significant. The correlation between mother's current age and the total bullying score was .064 ($r = .064$, $N = 67$, $p = .607$) and was not statistically significant. The correlation between father's highest degree and the total bullying score was .060 ($r = .060$, $N = 67$, $p = .629$) and was not statistically significant. The correlation between the mother's highest degree and the total bullying score was .075 ($r = .075$, $N = 67$, $p = .485$) and was not statistically significant. The correlation between the grade of child for whom the

survey was being completed and the total bullying score was .087 ($r = .087$, $N = 67$, $p = .485$) and was not statistically significant. The correlation between the gender of child for whom the survey was being completed and the total bullying score was .055 ($r = .055$, $N = 67$, $p = .656$) and was not statistically significant. None of the correlations between demographic data and the total bullying score were statistically significant.

Research Questions and Answers

1) What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which parents are incorporated into school life and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?

There is a statistically significant, but moderately weak, relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which parents are incorporated into school life and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator.

2) What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's academic climate, including their satisfaction with the overall instructional quality, and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?

There is no statistically significant relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's academic climate, including their satisfaction with the overall instructional quality, and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator.

3) What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which the school's communications and administrative efforts are open, honest, sincere, and fair and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?

There is a statistically significant, but weak, relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which the school's communications and administrative efforts are open, honest, sincere, and fair and their inclination to report a bullying incident to an administrator.

Hypotheses

H_0^1 : There is no statistically significant relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which they are incorporated into school life and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator.

H_0^1 is rejected.

H_0^2 : There is no statistically significant relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's academic climate, including their satisfaction with the overall instructional quality, and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator.

H_0^2 is retained.

H_0^3 : There is no statistically significant relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which the school's communications and administrative efforts are open, honest, sincere, and fair and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator.

H_0^3 is rejected.

Summary

The results of the current investigation indicate that there is a statistically significant, yet moderately weak, relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which parents are incorporated into school life and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. However, there is no statistically significant relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's academic climate, including their satisfaction with the overall instructional quality, and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. Conversely, there is a statistically significant, yet weak, relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which the school's communications and administrative efforts are open, honest, sincere, and fair and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. None of the demographic data were significantly related to parents' inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. Within this analysis, parents are most inclined to report a bullying incident to a school administrator when they perceive a greater degree of parental inclusion in school life. Chapter V includes an introduction, recommendations for policy, practice, avenues for future research, and conclusions.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter V reexamines the purpose and results of the current study and unites the two; advances the conclusions in relation to the literature and research findings; offers recommendations for policy and practice; and suggests topics for future research.

Oftentimes, school administrators are unaware of the bullying behavior perpetrated in their buildings. They are oblivious to these occurrences because students tend to commit bullying acts in less-supervised school areas, such as hallways, bathrooms, playgrounds, or cafeterias (Tenenbaum et al., 2011) and because bullied students tend to hide their victimization by not reporting it to adults (Holt et al., 2009, as cited in Brown et al., 2013). However, recent legislation has made schools throughout the United States responsible for reporting bullying and intervening in bullying events (Belmore, 2016). New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights, enacted in 2011, is one of the most comprehensive of the nation's anti-bullying statutes (Nash, 2012); this law requires school districts to adopt detailed anti-bullying policies that include staff training on bullying and suicide prevention and intervention; to appoint a school specialist and district coordinator and assign them specific responsibilities; to follow the exact directives and deadlines for how, to whom, and when to report bullying incidents; and to post a grade on every district and school website, reflecting their efforts to combat bullying (Nash, 2012). Yet if school administrators are unaware that victimization has occurred in their

school, at school events, or through cyber-bullying, how can they be expected to comply with the law, how can they put suitable anti-bullying programs into place, and how can they effectively assist victimized students?

Research indicates that children and teens who decide to reveal their bullying problem to an adult are more likely to tell a trusted parent than an adult at school (Brown et al., 2013). Although schools, through their anti-bullying programs, instruct parents to inform administrators and work with school personnel to resolve the problem, many parents choose to handle their child's victimization on their own. Most parents do not attend school anti-bullying presentations and, as a result, may not be aware that the school advises parents to report their child's bullying problem (Berger, 2007; Bradshaw, Zmuda, Kellan, & Jalongo, 2009). Sometimes, parents' uninformed efforts are ineffective or, even worse, exacerbate the problem (Sawyer et al., 2011).

Numerous studies reveal the long- and short-term social, emotional, physical, behavioral, and academic consequences of bullying for victims and perpetrators (Hampel et al., 2009; Juvonen et al., 2011; Otieno & Choongo, 2010; Olweus, 2011; Bonano & Hymel, 2010; Heilbron & Prinstein, 2010; Ferrás & Selman, 2014). Research indicates that the longer children are victims of bullying, the harder it is for them to end the victimization and the greater the chance that they will experience adverse effects (Oliver & Candappa, 2007). Therefore, it is important that parents know to report information about their child's victimization to the school and that the school then acts on that information.

Research also shows that parents are more involved in their child's school overall when they view the school climate as positive (Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Lavenda, 2011). Because of awareness of this finding, knowledge of the increasingly widespread understanding that parents should notify and work with the school to resolve bullying situations (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004), and knowledge that younger students, when compared with older ones, are more likely to reveal victimization to a parent (Brown et al., 2013; Olweus, 1994; von Marees & Petermann, 2010), this researcher became interested in whether there is an association between a school contextual factor such as school climate and the parents' decision to inform the school of a bullying incident. The purpose of the present non-experimental, correlational, cross-sectional, and descriptive study was to examine whether or not there is a relationship between parents' perceptions of school climate and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. This one-district, single-school quantitative study also explored the influence of certain parent and child demographic information on parents' willingness to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. The demographic information included mother's age, father's age, mother's level of education, father's level of education, child's gender, and child's grade.

The study was guided by the following principal research question: What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's climate and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator? The study was also guided by the following three underlying research questions:

- 1) What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which parents are incorporated into school life and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?
- 2) What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's academic climate, including their satisfaction with the overall instructional quality, and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?
- 3) What relationship, if any, exists between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which the school's communications and administrative efforts are open, honest, sincere, and fair and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator?

The data collected in response to the research questions were examined using the Pearson product moment correlation method. The results of the study revealed that there is a statistically significant, positive, but moderately weak relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which parents are incorporated into school life and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator ($r = .320, p = .008$). This suggests that parents who view their child's school as a place where they are welcomed and included may feel more inclined to communicate a bullying incident to a school administrator. Conversely, parents who do not view their child's school as a place where they are welcomed and included may feel less inclined to communicate a bullying incident to a school administrator. The coefficient of determination is $r^2 = .10$. This means that 10% of the variance in the parents'

inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator can be explained by their perceptions of the degree to which parents are incorporated into school life.

There is also a statistically significant, positive, but weak relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the degree to which the school's communications and administrative efforts are open, honest, sincere, and fair and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator ($r = .242$, $p = .049$). The coefficient of determination is $r^2 = .06$. This means that 6% of the variance in the parents' inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator can be explained by their perceptions of the degree to which the school's communications and administrative efforts are open, honest, sincere, and fair. This suggests that parents who view their child's school as a place where interpersonal communication is open, honest, sincere, and fair may feel more inclined to communicate a bullying incident to a school administrator. Conversely, parents who do not view their child's school as a place where communication is open, honest, sincere, and fair may feel less inclined to communicate a bullying incident to a school administrator.

No statistically significant relationship was found between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school's academic climate, including their satisfaction with the overall instructional quality, and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator ($r = .207$, $p = .093$). The coefficient of determination is .04. This means that 4% of the variance in parents' inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator can be explained

by their perceptions of the school's academic climate, including their satisfaction with the overall instructional quality.

The total coefficient of determination is $r^2 = .20$, meaning that 20% of the total variance in parents' inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator can be explained by parental perceptions of the school climate as measured by the three domains of the New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey.

No statistically significant relationships were found between parent and child demographic information, including mother's age, father's age, mother's level of education, father's level of education, child's gender, and child's grade and parents' willingness to report a bullying incident to a school administrator.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

The current study focuses on the importance of parents' perceptions of the school climate regarding their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. The results show that there is a statistically significant relationship between suburban elementary school parents' perceptions of the school climate and their willingness to report an incident of victimization to an administrator.

However, the relationship is moderately weak to weak. Given the important goal of ameliorating bullying and assisting victimized youth, it is essential that even weak results lead to action. Therefore, resources, both financial and human, should be allocated toward understanding and improving the school's climate because it is related to parents' willingness to reveal bullying. By doing so, school leaders may gain a better understanding of the bullying in their school and become better able to

intervene. School leaders should make parents and other stakeholders aware of the improvements they have made to entice more parents to come forward.

Additionally, resources should be allocated for evidence-based anti-bullying programs and practices that include comprehensive information sessions for parents. These sessions should be made available to parents at times that are convenient to them, and childcare should be provided during the sessions. Research should be conducted to uncover the methods for increasing parental participation in anti-bullying efforts.

Moreover, school administrators should develop strategies for improving communication with parents. Through improved communication, administrators could better understand parents' concerns and better be able to take the appropriate actions to help students. Parents need to believe that they can trust administrators to work diligently with them to help their child. Researchers should examine the numerous ways in which administrators and parents can work together to intervene when a child is victimized, and they should evaluate how these approaches may vary by school level. Effective ways of working with parents to address student victimization should be included in school administrator training programs.

Recommendations for Future Research

Using a larger, more diverse sample, future research should examine the relationship between parents' perceptions of the school climate and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. Although the results of the current study were statistically significant for two of the three underlying research

questions, they were moderately weak to weak. It is possible that sampling from a larger district could have led to stronger results. The sample used in the present study was acquired through convenience sampling. As such, it included a large percentage of participants in the categories that represent older parents and a large percentage who are college educated and above. It is possible that these parents felt more at ease in the school than others might and that they felt more comfortable interacting with a school administrator than other parents might, regardless of their view of the school climate. Moreover, in the small school environment from which the sample was obtained, parents were more likely to have had interactions with a school administrator prior to reporting an incident than the parents of students in a larger district. A larger, more diverse sample from a larger district with several elementary schools may respond differently. A sample from this type of district would likely include parents who are not as at ease in the school environment, those who would be less likely to relate to a school administrator, and those who have never, or infrequently, interacted with an administrator at their child's school.

Future research should also examine the connection between parents' perceptions of the school climate and their willingness to report bullying to a school administrator when their child is at the middle or high school level. Although bullying occurs more frequently at the elementary and middle school levels than at the high school level and although parents are less likely to intervene in the victimization of older children (Olweus, 1994; von Marees & Petermann, 2010), it is important for older victimized students to have parental and school support to help

them cope with the situation (Kochendorfer-Ladd & Skinner, 2002; Mishna, Pepler, & Weiner, 2006).

Furthermore, research indicates that the parents of younger children may be more satisfied with the climate of their child's school than the parents of older children (Eccles et al., 1993). This might be because they tend to view the teachers as more responsive, supportive, and warm and as having more frequent positive interactions with students (Eccles & Midgley, 1989; Way, Reddy, & Rhodes, 2007). Typically, elementary school students have one main teacher, unlike middle and high school students who have several. Parents may also find that elementary school personnel include them more often and are more receptive to their input, particularly regarding the students' social and emotional concerns. Thus, the results may be different for studies that examine the link between parents' perceptions of school climate and their inclination to report bullying to an administrator at the middle and high school levels. Future research should focus on these higher school levels.

It is important to understand that the current study concentrated on parent "perceptions" of the school climate. Future research might study the same topic using objective indicators of school climate rather than perceptions. It is also important to note that the present research study used a self-report measure of parents' inclinations to reveal a bullying incident to a school administrator. It is possible, therefore, that social desirability may have influenced responses. Specifically, parents may believe that it is more socially desirable to say that they would report their child's problem to an administrator than to say that they would

not. Future researchers should consider measuring parental reporting behavior (e.g., whether they actually reported a bullying incident) by using means other than self-reporting.

Future studies should examine whether the form of victimization, direct (such as physical or explicit verbal bullying) or indirect (such as relational bullying), influences parents' willingness to report an incident to the school. It is possible that parents would perceive direct bullying to be more serious than indirect, although research shows this not to be the case (Waasdorp et. al., 2011), and that they would believe that the school would be more inclined to respond to a report of direct victimization. Therefore, parents may be more inclined to report the incident (Crick, Casas, & Nelson, 2002). It is also important for future studies to evaluate the relationship between parental reporting behavior and administrative style (e.g., having an open- or closed-door policy), as well as to examine responses of administrators when parents report bullying incidents to them (e.g., having or not having a plan in place, being or not being actively responsive).

Conclusions

The results of the current study indicate that there is an association between parents' perceptions of the school climate and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. This association, although statistically significant, is moderately weak to weak. The results extend prior research by demonstrating a connection between parents' perceptions of the school's ability to support and engage parents and to communicate in a manner that is open, honest, sincere, and fair and the extent to which parents choose to engage with the school to solve a

bullying problem. The results support the viewpoint that the school climate is an important contextual factor and that the school environment itself may influence parental participation in efforts to improve their child's social and emotional health at school. The results of the current study are consistent with research showing that parents who view the school's climate as positive and supportive of their participation are more likely to be involved in the school (Deplanty, Coulter-Kern, & Duchane, 2007, as cited in Waasdorp et al., 2011; Lavenda, 2011; Goldkind & Farmer, 2013). Moreover, the current study aligns with Olweus's (1993) findings that indicate parents' perceptions of the school's anti-bullying efforts are likely to impact the way they handle their child's victimization.

The social-ecological theory helped to frame the present study (Lewin, 1935; Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In line with this theory, bullying and victimization can be conceptualized as ecological phenomena that are created and maintained through the complex interactions between the person and the systems that surround him or her. These systems include the family, peer group, school, classroom, and larger community (Hong & Espelage, 2012). Research shows that parental behavior and school climate are two of the many ecological factors that can influence bullying and victimization (Sawyer et al., 2011; Davidson & Demaray, 2007; Nickerson et al., 2014). Similarly, the ecological systems theory can be used as a lens through which one can understand parental responses to children's victimization. An interpersonal factor that impacts parental inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator is the parent's perceptions of the school's climate.

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Appendix A

Letter to Saddle River Superintendent of Schools Requesting Approval

Saddle River School District
Wandell School

To: Mr. Louis DeLisio
From: Debra Strauss
Subject: Permission to Conduct Survey
Date: 02/27/2017

Dear Mr. DeLisio,

As you know, I am currently pursuing a Doctorate in K-12 Educational Administration at Seton Hall University. An important part of the program is the completion of a Doctoral Dissertation.

The purpose of my research is to look at the relationship between parents' perception of school climate and their inclination to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. Examining this relationship is extremely valuable because research indicates that although children tend to conceal from adults the fact that they were bullied, if they are to tell an adult at all, it is more likely to be a trusted parent than school personnel. Consequently, school administrators need parents to report their child's victimization if they are to be able to help the child and to conduct prevention and intervention efforts in general.

The survey consists of three parts. Part 1 asks parents of children in Kindergarten through fifth grade to complete the New Jersey School Climate Parent Survey. Part 2 consists of four questions and asks parents if they would or would not tell a school administrator if their child were bullied physically, verbally, socially, or through cyber-bullying. Part 3 consists of six demographic questions. The results of the study may help school administrators to increase the effectiveness of their anti-bullying prevention and intervention efforts.

Therefore, I am requesting your permission to conduct my research study at the Wandell School. If your permission were granted, I would distribute a survey to each parent/set of parents of a Wandell student in Kindergarten through fifth grade.

Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured. No one at Wandell except for me will have access to the data, but I will certainly provide the overall results to the district once the research is completed.

If I do receive your permission, I would like to conduct this research in the spring of the 2016-2017 school year. Thank you in advance for your permission to conduct my study and your support of the pursuit of my Doctorate.

Sincerely,

Debra Strauss

Appendix B

Approval Letter from the Superintendent of Schools

Saddle River School District

Wandell School

97 East Allendale Road, Saddle River, New Jersey 07458

(201) 327-0727

Fax (201) 236-8166

Mr. Louis DeLisio
Superintendent/ Principal

Mr. Glenn Stokes
District Vice Principal

March 17, 2017

This letter serves to confirm approval for Debra Strauss to conduct research at the Wandell School for her dissertation titled, The Relationship Between Parents' Perception of School Climate and Their Inclination to Report a Bullying Incident to a School Administrator."



Mr. Louis DeLisio
Interim Superintendent of Schools/Principal

Appendix C

Letter of Solicitation to Wandell Elementary School Parents



Wandell Elementary School
97 East Allendale Road, Saddle River, NJ 07458
jknopf@wandellschool.org (201) 327-0727 ext. 269

Dear Parent,

I am writing to ask you to take part in Mrs. Strauss's research study for her dissertation. Mrs. Strauss is the Saddle River Supervisor of Special Education. She is doing this research for her doctorate in K-12 School Administration at Seton Hall University.

Mr. Louis DeLisio, Saddle River's Superintendent/Principal, has allowed Mrs. Strauss to do her study at the Wandell School. The purpose of this study is to look at the relationship between parents' opinion of the school's climate and their willingness to report bullying to a school administrator. School climate is the quality and character of school life.

Examining this relationship is very important. Studies show that children who choose to tell an adult that they were bullied, are more likely to tell a parent than someone at school. Therefore, schools need parents to tell them about bullying so that they can help children.

Knowledge gained from this study can help schools stop bullying. Filling out the survey is up to you. You only need to answer the questions that you want to answer.

I am sending out the surveys for Mrs. Strauss. She will not know if you have returned your survey. Surveys are being sent to all Wandell Elementary School parents.

The survey takes about 15 minutes to fill out. It asks what you WOULD do if your child were bullied. Your child does not have to have been bullied for you to answer the questions.

The survey and a stamped envelope are in this packet. Please put your finished survey in the envelope, seal it, and mail it. **Your answers are completely anonymous and confidential. Please do not put any information that tells who you are on the survey or envelope.**

Seton Hall University
Institutional Review Board

MAR 29 2017

Approval Date

College of Education and Human Services
Executive Ed.D. Program
Tel: 973.275.2306 • Fax: 973.275.2484
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685

Expiration Date

MAR 29 2018

A HOME FOR THE MIND, THE HEART AND THE SPIRIT



The study will look at the survey answers as a group. Mrs. Strauss is the only person at school who will see the surveys. The surveys and a flash drive will be kept in a locked cabinet. The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research (IRB) has approved this study. If you have any questions about this, you can reach the IRB chairperson at 973-313-6314 or irb@shu.edu.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

June Knopf, Secretary,
Saddle River School District

Seton Hall University
Institutional Review Board

MAR 29 2017

Approval Date

Expiration Date

MAR 29 2018

College of Education and Human Services
Executive Ed.D. Program
Tel: 973.275.2306 • Fax: 973.275.2484
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685

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Appendix D

Board of Education Resolution to Approve Conducting the Study

***Saddle River School District
Wandell School***

97 East Allendale Road, Saddle River, New Jersey 07458
(201) 327-0727 Fax (201) 236-8166

Louis J. DeLisio
Interim Superintendent/Principal

Glenn N. Stokes
Vice Principal

March 20, 2017

Mrs. Debra Strauss

Dear Mrs. Strauss:

At the Saddle River Board of Education meeting held on March 17, 2017, the following resolution was approved:

E-880 RESEARCH STUDY – DEBRA STRAUSS

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Saddle River Board of Education approves Debra Strauss to conduct her research study for her Seton Hall University Doctoral Dissertation titled "The Relationship Between Parents' Perception of School Climate and Their Inclination to Report a Bullying Incident to an Administrator."

Very truly yours,



Louis J. DeLisio
Interim Superintendent/Principal

LJD:jm

"Where Excellence Is Our First Priority"

Appendix E

Letter of Solicitation to Reliability Study Participants



Wandell Elementary School
97 East Allendale Road, Saddle River, NJ 07458
jknopf@wandellschool.org (201) 327-0727 ext. 269

Dear Parent,

I am writing to ask you to take part in Mrs. Strauss's research study for her dissertation. Mrs. Strauss is the Saddle River Supervisor of Special Education. She is doing this research for her doctorate in K-12 School Administration at Seton Hall University.

Mr. Louis DeLisio, Saddle River's Superintendent/Principal, has allowed Mrs. Strauss to do her study at the Wandell School. The purpose of this study is to look at the relationship between parents' opinion of the school's climate and their willingness to report bullying to a school administrator. School climate is the quality and character of school life.

Examining this relationship is very important. Studies show that children who choose to tell an adult that they were bullied, are more likely to tell a parent than someone at school. Therefore, schools need parents to tell them about bullying so that they can help children. **Knowledge gained from this study can help schools stop bullying.**

I am asking you to participate in the Reliability Study for this research. Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results. Test-retest reliability is a measure of reliability obtained by administering the same test twice over a period of time to a group of people. I am asking you to answer the four bullying questions and then answer them again three days later without looking at your prior responses.

Filling out the survey is up to you. You only need to answer the questions that you want to answer.

I am sending out the surveys for Mrs. Strauss. She will not know if you have returned your survey.

The survey takes about five minutes to fill out. It asks what you WOULD do if your child were bullied. Your child does not have to have been bullied for you to answer the questions.

College of Education and Human Services
Executive Ed.D. Program
Tel: 973.275.2306 • Fax: 973.275.2484
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685



Two copies of the survey and a stamped envelope are in this packet. Please put your finished surveys in the envelope, seal it, and mail it. **Your answers are completely anonymous and confidential. Please do not put any information that tells who you are on the survey or envelope.**

The study will look at the survey answers as a group. The surveys and a flash drive will be kept in a locked cabinet. The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research (IRB) has approved this study. If you have any questions about this, you can reach the IRB chairperson at 973-313-6314 or irb@shu.edu.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

June Knopf, Secretary,
Saddle River School District

College of Education and Human Services
Executive Ed.D. Program
Tel: 973.275.2306 • Fax: 973.275.2484
400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079-2685

Appendix F

Letter of Solicitation to Validity Study Participants

Debra Strauss
Wandell Elementary School
97 East Allendale Road, Saddle River, NJ 07458
dstrauss@wandellschool.org (201) 327-0727 ext. 267

April 10, 2017

Dear Child Assault Prevention Facilitator,

I am the Supervisor of Special Education for the Saddle River School District, and I am pursuing a doctorate in K-12 School Administration at Seton Hall University. I am writing to ask you to assist with the research study I am conducting for my dissertation.

Mr. Louis DeLisio, Saddle River's Superintendent/Principal, and the Board of Education have allowed me to do my study at the Wandell School. The purpose of this study is to look at the relationship between parents' opinion of the school's climate and their willingness to report a bullying incident to a school administrator. School climate is the quality and character of school life.

Examining this relationship is very important. Studies show that children who choose to tell an adult that they were bullied are more likely to tell a parent than someone at school. Therefore, schools need parents to tell them about bullying so that they can help children.

It is essential for the survey instrument I have developed to be reliable and valid. To ensure the survey's validity, I am measuring its Content Validity. Content Validity is the degree to which test items represent the domain of the property being measured. Both Item Validity (whether the items are appropriate to the measurement of the content area) and Sampling Validity (how well the survey covers the entire content area being examined) make up Content Validity.

Content validity is ascertained through the judgment of experts. Therefore, I am asking you, because you are an expert in the area of bullying, to read the four bullying questions and respond to questions about their item validity and sampling validity. I am only asking you to read the questions in PART II of the survey. This should take you about ten minutes.

Please respond to the validity questions included in this packet. Then place the response page in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope, and mail it back to me. Your responses are anonymous and confidential. Please do not include any identifying information on your response or on the return envelope.

If you have any questions about the survey or the study, you may contact me at dstrauss@wandellschool.org or (201) 327-0727 ext. 267. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,


Debra Strauss

Appendix G

Institutional Review Board Approval



March 29, 2017

Debra Strauss

Dear Ms. Strauss,

The Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board has reviewed the information you have submitted addressing the concerns for your proposal entitled "The Relationship Between Parents' Perception of School Climate and Their Inclination to Report a Bullying Incident to a School Administrator". Your research protocol is hereby accepted as revised and is categorized as exempt.

Please note that, where applicable, subjects must sign and must be given a copy of the Seton Hall University current stamped Letter of Solicitation or Consent Form before the subjects' participation. All data, as well as the investigator's copies of the signed Consent Forms, must be retained by the principal investigator for a period of at least three years following the termination of the project.

Should you wish to make changes to the IRB approved procedures, the following materials must be submitted for IRB review and be approved by the IRB prior to being instituted:

- Description of proposed revisions;
- *If applicable*, any new or revised materials, such as recruitment fliers, letters to subjects, or consent documents; and
- *If applicable*, updated letters of approval from cooperating institutions and IRBs.

At the present time, there is no need for further action on your part with the IRB.

In harmony with federal regulations, none of the investigators or research staff involved in the study took part in the final decision.

Sincerely,

Mary F. Ruzicka, Ph.D.
Professor
Director, Institutional Review Board

cc: Dr. Joseph Stetar


Office of Institutional Review Board

Presidents Hall • 400 South Orange Avenue • South Orange, New Jersey 07079 • Tel: 973.313.6314 • Fax: 973.275.2361 • www.shu.edu

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Appendix H

Approval for Dissertation Proposal

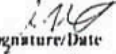



 COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AND HUMAN SERVICES
SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

APPROVAL FOR DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Candidate Dora Strauss has successfully completed all requirements for this proposal. This candidate's proposal has been reviewed and the candidate may proceed to collect data necessary to complete the approved proposal for dissertation under the direction of the mentor and the candidate's dissertation committee.

If there are substantive differences between what has been approved and the actual study, the final dissertation should indicate on separate pages in the Appendix, the approval of the committee for these changes.

Title of Proposed Dissertation
The Relationship Between Parents' Perception of School Climate and Their Inclination to Report a Bullying Incident to a School Administrator
Dissertation Committee

Dr. Joseph Stetar Mentor (Print Name)	 3/9/17 Signature/Date
Dr. Michael Kuchar Committee Member (Print Name)	 Signature/Date
Dr. William Ronzitti Committee Member (Print Name)	 Signature/Date
Dr. C. Lauren Schoen Committee Member (Print Name)	 Signature/Date
Committee Member (Print Name)	Signature/Date

Appendix I

Survey Instrument

INSTRUCTIONS

Please read each question carefully, and circle the number under the one answer that most closely fits your opinion. We appreciate your taking the time to do the survey.

BEGIN YOUR SURVEY BELOW ↓

1. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I am satisfied with the length of the school day.	1	2	3	4	5
b. My child's school environment is clean and in good condition.	1	2	3	4	5
c. I like my child's school building.	1	2	3	4	5
d. My child feels safe at school.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Students at my child's school are well-behaved.	1	2	3	4	5
f. My child is safe going to and from school.	1	2	3	4	5
g. The learning environment at my child's school is excellent.	1	2	3	4	5
h. I am proud that my child attends this school.	1	2	3	4	5
i. I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
j. Communication with families occurs in an open and respectful manner.	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE →

2. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. School staff has helped my child learn how to manage time.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Teachers assign high-quality homework that helps my child learn.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Teachers at my child's school set high standards for students.	1	2	3	4	5
d. My child's teachers encourage students to think independently.	1	2	3	4	5
e. The best teachers and staff are kept at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Overall, I am satisfied with my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
g. The teachers at my child's school are excellent.	1	2	3	4	5
h. The academic needs of students are met at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
i. The teachers and staff at my child's school follow through on commitments.	1	2	3	4	5
j. My child's academic performance has improved because of the staff at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
k. Students at my child's school respect their teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
l. Overall, I respect the teachers at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
m. The rules for student conduct are consistently enforced at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE →

3. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. School staff encourages students to respect each other's differences (for example, gender, race, culture, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
b. Adults who work in my child's school treat students with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Adults in my child's school seem to work well with one another.	1	2	3	4	5
d. I wish my child went to a different school.	1	2	3	4	5
e. School staff has a positive impact on my child's behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
f. The rules for student behavior at my child's school are fair.	1	2	3	4	5
g. My child can turn to friends at school with questions about homework.	1	2	3	4	5
h. The teachers in the school have built strong relationships with my child.	1	2	3	4	5
i. My child has friends at school he or she can trust and talk to about problems.	1	2	3	4	5
j. I know what is going on in my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE →

4. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. My child's school tries to get family members to take part in school activities.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I am actively involved with my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Parents are involved in making important school decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
d. My child has pride in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
e. I feel comfortable talking with my child's teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
f. I am well-informed about how my child is doing in school.	1	2	3	4	5
g. I feel welcome at my child's school.	1	2	3	4	5
h. I know what my child's teacher expects of my child.	1	2	3	4	5

5. My child attends an afterschool program at a:

	Yes	No
a. Public school.	1	2
b. Church or religious organization.	1	2
c. Community center or community-sponsored entity.	1	2
d. Some other location.	1	2

PART II

Bullying Scale

Definitions:

Dr. Daniel Olweus, the Norwegian research psychologist who is considered the father of bullying research, defines bullying as **a form of aggressive behavior in school age children and adolescents, in which the bully intentionally inflicts harm, distress, or fear on his or her victim. These unwanted negative interactions happen repeatedly and involve a perceived or real imbalance of power or strength.**

According to the United States Federal Government Department of Health and Human Services' anti-bullying website, "Stopbullying.gov," bullying actions are classified as physical, verbal, social, and cyber-bullying. These classifications are defined as follows:

Physical bullying involves hurting/harming a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:

- Hitting/kicking/punching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gestures

Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:

- Teasing
- Name-calling

- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

Social Bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

Cyber-bullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology.

Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text-messages, chat, and websites.

Please respond to the following four questions based upon the definitions above and by defining a school administrator as a superintendent, principal, vice/assistant principal, director, or supervisor. Please place a check mark next to the answer that applies to you. If you have more than one elementary school-aged child, please respond with your oldest elementary school-aged child in mind.

1. If my child were to be physically bullied at school or at a school-sponsored activity,

_____ I would inform a school administrator

☐ I would NOT inform a school administrator

2. If my child were to be verbally bullied at school or at a school-sponsored activity,

☐ I would inform a school administrator

☐ I would NOT inform a school administrator

3. If my child were to be relationally bullied at school or at a school-sponsored activity,

☐ I would inform a school administrator

☐ I would NOT inform a school administrator

4. If my child were to be bullied through electronic means such as a computer or cellular phone (cyber-bullied),

☐ I would inform a school administrator

☐ I would NOT inform a school administrator

PART III

Demographic Survey

Please respond to the following demographic questions by placing a check mark next to the answer that applies to you:

1. Father's current age:

☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40+

2. Mother's current age:

☐ 20-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40+

3. Father's highest degree attained:

☐ High School Diploma ☐ Bachelors ☐ Masters
☐ Doctorate/Professional

4. Mother's highest degree attained:

☐ High School Diploma ☐ Bachelors ☐ Masters
☐ Doctorate/Professional

5. Grade of child for which the survey is being completed:

☐ K ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

6. Gender of child for which the survey is being completed:

☐ Male ☐ Female